

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (previously amended) A brace assembly for securing a panel across a windowed building component located between opposing frame walls in order to protect the windowed building component during a storm comprising:
  - a bar having a first end portion and a second end portion;
  - a plurality of spaced apart plates fixed at the first end portion of the bar, each of said plates including a threaded hole; and
  - a threaded rod having a first end and a second end, said first end being adjustably, threadably connected to the bar through the threaded holes and said second end including a foot plate, wherein said brace assembly is adapted to be positioned against a panel positioned across a windowed building component with rotation of the threaded rod forcing the foot plate and second end portion of the bar against the opposing frame walls, thereby securing the panel in a protective posture across the windowed building component.
2. (previously amended) The brace assembly according to claim 1, further comprising: a handle member provided at the second end portion of the threaded rod for facilitating rotation of the threaded rod.
3. (previously amended) The brace assembly according to claim 2, further comprising: a cross bore provided at the second end portion of the threaded rod, said handle member being slidably received in the cross bore.

4. (currently amended) ~~A~~ On a building having ~~brace assembly for securing a panel~~  
~~across~~ a windowed building component located between opposing frame walls and a  
panel extending across the windowed building component in order to protect the  
windowed building component during a storm, a brace assembly comprising:

a bar having a first end portion and a second end portion which are spaced apart  
so as to define a longitudinal length of the bar, wherein the bar is formed of wood and  
includes a bore formed in the first end portion;

a plate fixed at the first end portion of the bar, said plate including a threaded  
hole; and

a threaded rod having a first end and a second end, the first end of the rod being  
sized to be freely received in the bore, and said first end being adjustably, threadably  
connected to the bar through the threaded hole and said second end including a foot plate,  
wherein said brace assembly ~~is adapted to be~~ being positioned against ~~a~~ the panel for  
substantially the entire longitudinal length of the bar and positioned across ~~a~~ the  
windowed building component with rotation of the threaded rod forcing the foot plate  
and second end portion of the bar against the opposing frame walls, thereby securing the  
panel in a protective posture across the windowed building component.

5. (previously amended) The brace assembly according to claim 4, wherein the plate is  
fixed directly to a terminal end of the first end portion of the bar.

6. (original) The brace assembly according to claim 1, further comprising:

another bar having a first end portion and a second end portion; and

a connector for interconnecting the bar and the another bar.

7. (original) The brace assembly according to claim 6, further comprising:

holes formed in each of the bar, the another bar and the connector;

and

a plurality of locking pins for interconnecting the bar and the another bar to the connector, with each of the plurality of locking pins extending through a respective set of the holes which are aligned.

8. (previously amended) The brace assembly according to claim 1, further comprising: an extension adapted to slidably receive the second end portion of said bar, wherein the extension redefines the second end portion of the bar so as to be positionable against a respective one of the opposing frame walls.

9. (original) The brace assembly according to claim 8, further comprising:

holes formed in each of the bar and the extension; and

a plurality of locking pins for interconnecting the bar and the extension, with each of the plurality of locking pins extending through aligned ones of the holes in the bar and the extension.

10. (original) The brace assembly according to claim 1, further comprising: a gripping pad provided on the second end portion of the bar.

11. (original) The brace assembly according to claim 1, further comprising: a connecting strip for interconnecting multiple windowed building component protecting panels.

12. (original) The bracing assembly according to claim 11, wherein the connecting strip includes spaced walls which are interconnected by a cross piece, with the spaced walls and cross piece defining opposing panel receiving channels.

13. (previously amended) A method of protecting a windowed building component during a storm comprising:

placing at least one protective panel across the windowed building component within a building opening including opposing frame walls;

positioning a brace assembly between the opposing frame walls with a bar of the brace assembly pressing against the protective panel for substantially an entire longitudinal length of the bar;

initiate longitudinal shifting a rod, which is threadably attached to a plate provided on a first end portion of the bar of the brace assembly, relative to the bar by rotating the rod such that a first end of the rod shifts out of the bar; and

continuing to longitudinally shift the rod relative to the bar such that each of a second end portion of the bar and a foot piece provided on a second end of the rod abuts a respective one of the opposing frame walls.

14. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising: threadably attaching the rod to the first end portion of the bar by fixing a plate having a nut defining threaded hole to the first end portion.

15. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising: rotating the rod through a handle member attached to the rod.

16. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising: interconnecting a pair of the bars through a connector and locking pins to form the brace assembly.

17. (original) The method of claim 16, further comprising: attaching an extension onto the second end portion of the bar.

18. (original) The method of claim 17, further comprising: interconnecting the bar and the extension through locking pins to form the brace assembly.

19. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising: interconnecting multiple protective panels across the windowed building panel through a connecting strip.

20. (original) The method of claim 19, further comprising:

    positioning the connecting strip such that an edge of one of the multiple protective panels is received in a channel of the connecting strip; and

    locating an edge of another one of the multiple protective panels in an opposing channel of the connecting strip.